

PART VII

Farm Marketing and Level of Living

Location and Transportation for Marketing

The Marketing of Asotin County farm products is affected by distance from major cities and food processing centers and by the relatively small local consuming market. Remoteness from Puget Sound, Portland and Spokane adds to transportation costs for crops and livestock shipped out as well as for essential supplies and equipment needed on the farms. Nearest urban centers for marketing Asotin County products locally are the Clarkston-Lewiston district of about 8,000 persons, Pullman with 11,500 and Walla Walla with 25,500. Major terminal markets for grain and livestock are Spokane, 160 miles to the north and Portland, Oregon, over 300 miles to the west. Distance and road facilities make Walla Walla, Spokane and Portland the major terminal markets for Asotin County's major commodities--wheat, barley, cattle and fruit. These items are capable of being shipped considerable distances to foreign, national and regional terminal markets by rapid rail and motor express.

Trucking is the primary method of transportation used by farmers and agricultural product shippers. The area is served by several franchised interstate motor carrier companies and there are numerous contract haulers of grain, livestock and fruit operating out of Clarkston, Pullman, Pomeroy, Dayton and Walla Walla. Improved highways and motor carrier equipment have facilitated larger volume shipment from Asotin County. In the last decade more grain and livestock farmers have acquired trucks.

Four U.S. and state highways are used for shipping. Major routes used for grain and cattle hauling are U.S. 195, which connects Clarkston with rail heads to the northward and livestock and grain shipment points in Whitman County and the Spokane area. Clarkston is 115 miles from Spokane by this route. Second most important route is over U.S. highway 410 to Walla Walla, 97 miles from Clarkston and thence westward over U.S. 30 to Portland, Oregon, 355 miles from Clarkston. Other routes used are highways 3 and U.S. 95 to LaGrande, Oregon and to Ontario and Boise, Idaho.

Grain and livestock shippers make use of railway facilities serving Whitman, Garfield and Walla Walla Counties and the Clarkston-Lewiston industrial district. Most important rail facilities used are the Union Pacific and Northern Pacific joint branch line which follows the north bank of the Snake River and runs from Lewiston to a junction with transcontinental lines in the Pasco area. This is an important branch line hauling wheat and cattle out of the lower Snake and Clearwater River Valleys. Other rail facilities used are the Union Pacific branch line which terminates at Pomeroy in Garfield County and a Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railway branch line which has terminals at Colton and Uniontown in Whitman County and Genesee, Idaho. This line feeds into junctions with transcontinental railroads at Spokane.

Income: Value of Products Sold

Census of Agriculture data on the value of farm products sold show that gross farm income has been trending upward in recent years. All Asotin County

farms marketed agricultural products worth \$2,966,890 in 1954 compared with \$2,611,370 in 1949. Returns to farmers have increased about 12 percent since 1949. Asotin County ranks twenty-seventh in the state in value of farm products sold.

Sales of farm products and farm incomes vary by different types and sizes of farms. Nearly two-thirds of the county's 453 farms are classified as commercial farms selling products worth more than \$250 per year. The majority of the commercial farms are in medium-income levels, selling less than \$10,000 worth of crops and livestock per year. Of 252 commercial farms, about 10 percent are high-income farms with sales exceeding \$25,000 per year. About 35 percent are in the income range of \$10,000 to \$25,000 per year and the remaining 55 percent sell from \$250 to \$10,000 per year. Large-scale growing of wheat and extensive livestock operations account for an above-state-average level of farm income.

Total Value of all Farm Products Sold, 1954: \$2,966,890

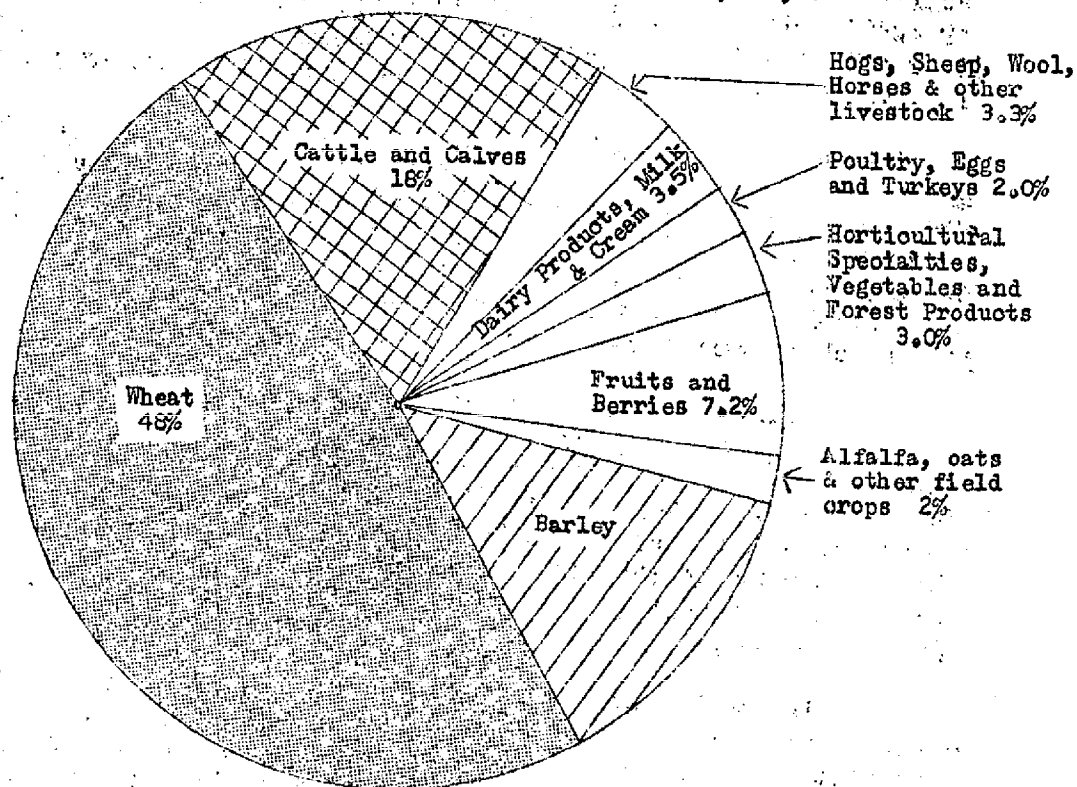


Figure 13.- Sources of Cash Income, Asotin County Farms, 1954

Source: U.S. Census, Agriculture, 1954

Marketing Field Crops: Wheat, Barley, Hay

Wheat is the predominant commercial crop of Asotin County. About 48 percent of all farm marketing in terms of dollar value is in wheat. In 1954 the harvest of 783,300 bushels of wheat had a market value of about \$2.15 per bushel making the total crop value at \$1,684,095. About 92 percent of the crop was sold and 8 percent kept on farms for seed and feed. Wheat marketed in 1954 returned approximately \$1,470,850 divided among 125 growers.

Barley is an important secondary cash grain crop. Barley was grown by about 80 farms in 1954 and total marketings were 217,000 bushels with market value to growers of \$471,000. Oats were a minor cash grain in 1954 with about 15,000 bushels valued at \$12,000 being sold on the market. Potatoes, clover seed and alfalfa seed are other minor field crops marketed locally.

Facilities for trading, storing, shipping and hauling grain are well developed within and adjacent to Asotin County. In the vicinity of the city of Asotin there are storage and feed milling facilities with storage capacity of 1,055,000 bushels. Wheat growers shipping to the lower Columbia River and Puget Sound terminals use storages located at Pomeroy, Lewiston and in southern Whitman County. Most Asotin County wheat moves to Portland, Oregon and Vancouver and Longview, Washington for disposition.

Table 24.- Crops Marketed From Asotin County, 1954

Type of Crops Sold	Amount Received By Farmers (Dollars)	Percent All Crops Sold
Field Crops (wheat, barley, oats, dry peas, hay, grass seeds, potatoes)	\$1,870,588	87.6
Fruits, Nuts and Berries (peaches, apples, pears, apricots, prunes, raspberries)	214,630	10.0
Horticultural Specialties (cut flowers, plants, bulbs, seeds, trees, vines)	47,790	2.2
Vegetables (sweet corn, tomatoes, carrots, dry onions)	3,097	.2
Total amount received by farmers for cash crops	\$2,136,105	100.0

Source: U.S. Census, Agriculture

Marketing Fruits and Berries

Marketings of fruit and berries returned over \$214,000 to Asotin growers in 1954. Sweet cherries, peaches, pears, apricots and apples are the main fruits shipped. In normal years sweet cherries and peaches make up the bulk of commercial sales by fruit growers. Over 125 tons of sweet cherries and 100 tons of peaches were available for shipping in 1954. Fruit growers haul to Dayton, Waitsburg, Walla Walla, Pasco and Lewiston, shipping points for fruit. A minor volume of fresh-market strawberries and raspberries are marketed in the local southeastern Washington area to retail stores.

Marketing Cattle, Hogs, Sheep and Wool

Sales of live animals for slaughter and for stockers and feeders totaled over \$620,000 in 1954 and made up about 21 percent of the county's farm economy. Cattle and calves are the major items sold, bringing more than \$555,000. Hogs are second, making up sales of about \$43,500. About 250 farms sold cattle and calves in 1954. Sheep and wool were minor, sales amounting to about \$28,000.

Major markets for Asotin County livestock are in the general Blue Mountain region of Washington, Oregon and Idaho. Livestockmen haul to meat packers' yards at Walla Walla, Clarkston, Lewiston and Spokane. Wool is generally marketed in Portland, Oregon. Major shipments of cattle and lambs are made by rail to Portland, Spokane, Yakima and Seattle.

Table 25.- Livestock and Livestock Products Marketed
Asotin County, 1954

Class of Livestock Products Sold	Quantity Marketed	Amount Received By Farmers
<u>Dairy Products</u>		
Whole milk-----	1,652,663 lbs.	\$ 88,643
Butterfat-----	28,214 lbs.	14,467
Total all dairy products		\$103,110
<u>Poultry and poultry products</u>		
Chickens-----	6,121 birds	\$ 6,596
Eggs-----	104,509 dozen	46,967
Turkeys, ducks, geese-----		5,505
Total all poultry and products		\$ 59,068
<u>Animals sold alive</u>		
Cattle-----	2,916 head	\$350,382
Calves-----	3,641 head	205,480
Hogs and pigs-----	1,502 head	43,528
Sheep and lambs-----	1,635 head	18,574
Horses and mules-----	35 head	4,025
Total all animals sold alive		\$621,989
<u>Other livestock and livestock products sold-----</u>		\$ 9,446
Total amount received for livestock and livestock products-----		\$793,613

Source: U.S. Census, Agriculture

Marketing Poultry and Eggs

Poultry and egg marketing is minor and is organized for satisfying local wholesale and retail outlets. The area is barely self-sufficient in eggs. Dressed poultry is shipped in from other counties to make up the deficit. Fresh eggs are the principal poultry product sold. About 150 farms produced eggs for market in 1954 and received a total of \$47,000. In 1954 they sold 104,500 dozen to the markets of Clarkston, Lewiston and Asotin. Dressed poultry sales included about 2,000 broilers, 4,000 other chickens and about 2,000 turkeys. Total cash returns to farmers from eggs, chickens and turkeys amounted to about \$59,000.

Marketing Dairy Products

Whole milk and cream is marketed locally by about 50 dairy farms. Sales have been trending upward since 1949 and amounted to \$88,640 in 1954. Cream

sales declined to a total value of about \$14,500 but whole milk has increased. Principal outlet is a dairy distributing plant in Clarkston which helps serve the Clarkston, Asotin and Lewiston industrial area. Farm-churned butter production has dwindled, but about 75 farms reported making butter for home use in 1954. The area has a deficit in dairy products and some whole milk, cream and butter is shipped in from Idaho and Whitman County.

Table 26.- Dairy Products Sold From Farms
Asotin County, 1939-1954

Year	Whole Milk Sold From Farms		Cream Sold From Farms		Butter Sold From Farms	
	(pounds)	(dollars)	(pounds)	(dollars)	(pounds)	(dollars)
1939	1,850,000	\$42,000	88,150	\$22,050	8,920	\$3,568
1944	860,000	27,500	79,200	39,600	100	280
1949	643,345	40,300	37,320	21,750	--	--
1954	1,652,660	88,640	28,215	14,460	--	--

Source: U.S. Census, Agriculture

Marketing Farm Forest Products

In recent years there has been an increase in volume and value of woodland products sold by Asotin County farmers. Farms within the forested Blue Mountains area sold logs, pulpwood, fence posts and fuelwood worth over \$37,000 during 1954. Good markets for these products are nearby in the mills of the Clarkston-Lewiston district. Improved roads and trucking equipment has improved access to Blue Mountain area farm woodlands. An increasing number of ranchers have been harvesting and marketing products from their woodlands in recent years.

Table 27.- Forest Products on Farms, Asotin County, 1954

Type of Product	Farms Reporting	Quantity
Firewood and fuelwood cut-----	29	337 cords
Fence posts cut-----	15	9,082 posts
Sawlogs and veneer logs cut-----	16	2,362 M bd. ft.
Pulpwood cut-----	1	300 cords
Total value of farm forest products sold and used on the farm-----	18	\$37,171

Source: U.S. Census, Agriculture

Specified Farm Expenditures

Asotin County farmers who reported expenditures in 1954 spent over \$642,000 during the year for labor, feed, petroleum products, fertilizer and machine hire. Chief farming expense was for hired labor used in wheat and fruit production and livestock management. Labor costs for 223 farms averaged \$1,080 per farm. A high degree of mechanized farming required heavy expenditures for gasoline, oil and machinery hire. Feed costs for hay and grain by

beef and dairy cattle farms were high. Compared with 1949 costs for feed, labor and all other supplies and services were greater in 1954.

Servicing and supplying Asotin County's 465 farms is an important basis of local business in Clarkston and Asotin. This farm trade area is a market for supplies, services and equipment used in agricultural production each year.

Table 28.- Specified Farm Expenditures in 1954, Asotin County

Type of Expenditure	Farms Reporting	Expenditure of all Farms	Average Per Farm
Machine hire.....	174	\$ 37,163	\$ 213.00
Hired labor.....	223	240,942	1,080.00
Feed for livestock and poultry	329	156,025	474.00
Gasoline, petroleum fuel & oil	310	159,800	515.00
Commercial fertilizer.....	158	47,972	304.00
Lime and liming materials.....	12	138	11.50
Total production costs.....		\$642,540	

Source: U.S. Census, Agriculture

Agricultural Income Compared to Other Income Sources

A study published in 1954 has shown that net income from agriculture in Asotin County was ranging from \$1,168,000 to \$1,834,000 per year and was increasing. This study at Washington State College by Guthrie and Boyle of types and sources of income found that agriculture was receiving about one-eighth of total county income. Agriculture was second to manufacturing (lumber and meat packing) as a source of wages and income.

Table 29.- Types and Sources of Income 1950-1952, Asotin County 1/

Type and Source of Income	Income in Dollars by Years			Percentage of County Income by Years		
	1950	1951	1952	1950	1951	1952
Agriculture	\$ 1,697,000	\$ 1,168,000	\$ 1,834,000	14.2	9.1	12.9
Construction	829,000	1,125,000	1,176,000	6.9	8.7	8.3
Government	734,000	867,000	976,000	6.1	6.7	6.9
Manufacturing	2,088,000	3,246,000	3,380,000	17.5	25.1	23.8
Service	1,031,000	1,071,000	1,172,000	8.6	8.3	8.3
Transportation, Communication and Utilities	970,000	1,001,000	1,143,000	8.1	7.8	8.1
Trade	1,826,000	1,901,000	1,809,000	15.3	14.7	12.7
Miscellaneous	332,000	313,000	380,000	2.8	2.4	2.7
Property Income	1,082,000	1,148,000	1,212,000	9.1	8.9	8.5
Other Income	1,362,000	1,077,000	1,108,000	11.4	8.3	7.8
Total	\$11,951,000	\$12,917,000	\$14,190,000	100.0	100.0	100.0

1/ John A. Guthrie and Stanley E. Boyle, County Income Payments in Washington, 1950-52. Pullman, Wash. Washington State College, Bulletin No. 26.

Level of Living on Asotin County Farms

On the whole, farm people have not enjoyed a level of living as high as city people. Farm incomes measured in dollars received for labor or goods sold are lower on the average than urban incomes. City people also have readily available more conveniences. Because of isolation and the scattered location of farm and ranch homes it is difficult to obtain electrical, telephone, sewer, running water and even highway service. Services are often too costly for public and private utility companies to provide for all rural homes and farmsteads, particularly in remote or inaccessible areas. In numerous cases, incomes are too low for farmers to put in their own electrical, water and other conveniences which families in city neighborhoods take for granted.

Ownership and the use of conveniences generally associated with a modern standard of living is well above national and state averages in Asotin County. A recent study of rural farm living levels over the state and the United States based on Agricultural Census figures found that Asotin County had an index of 170 compared with 122 for the United States and 154 for the State of Washington. A high average farm family net income in Asotin County contributes to its relatively high position in national and state scales of living. Asotin County farm homes as an average are more advanced in use of electrical power and appliances. In terms of housing, telephones, plumbing and automobile use, Asotin farm districts are above the state and national farm home average.

Table 30.- Indices of Level of Living of Asotin County Farm Families, 1950 Compared with State and National Averages

Index Items	Percentage of total farm families with listed index items		
	United States	Washington	Asotin County
Farm Family Level-of-Living	122	154	170
Median Income per Family	\$1,567	\$2,380	\$3,292
Electricity	78.3%	92.5%	98.3%
Electric Hot Water Heater	17.4	49.1	59.7
Electric Washing Machine	58.7	85.4	91.0
Home Freezers	12.1	14.5	15.8
Mech. Refrigerators	62.7	77.4	80.3
Telephone	38.2	57.5	74.0
Hot and Cold Water Plumbing	23.8	70.4	77.4
Central Heating	18.1	17.8	22.0
Houses with More than One Person per Room	22.3	15.7	9.4
Automobiles	63.0	77.0	68.9
Travel 10 Miles or More to Trading Center	21.4	20.5	35.2

Source: Walter L. Slocum and Carol L. Stone, The Farm People of Washington at Mid-Century. State College of Washington, Washington Agric. Exp. Stations, Bulletin 557, February 1955. Pullman, Washington.

Asotin County agriculture, while somewhat impeded by isolation from regional markets, and by physical handicaps such as hilly terrain and dry climate, has made steady progress. Its wheat industry is well advanced and its fruit and livestock industries are stable. Farming has become for many a full-time commercial activity and for others it supplements industrial work in the Clarkston-Lewiston district. Agriculture is a basic support of the local and general Inland Empire region. Numerous well managed wheat, fruit and cattle farms stand as monuments to persevering pioneers who chose their homes in this section of the Snake River Basin and the Blue Mountains.